



# Association of Minnesota Counties

May 12, 2016

To the Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

As county officials, one of our fundamental duties is to oversee the maintenance and repair of our local transportation infrastructure and services. Across the state, the transportation needs of our respective communities are actually quite similar – whether in Greater Minnesota or in the metro. We all share the responsibility of providing for adequate roads, bridges, and transit systems.

To address these needs, the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) supports new revenue for transportation. Specifically, we are in favor of a **comprehensive** transportation financing package that provides funding for roads, bridges, and transit services. It should also be **balanced** among regions of the state and modes of transportation. We believe the solution should be **sustainable** with on-going funding that is **dedicated** – constitutionally for roads and bridges and statutorily for transit.

Providing adequate funding for transportation is an issue of public safety. Keeping our road ways safe is a top priority for county officials. Every day, Minnesotans rely on our roads, bridges, and transit systems to bring their kids to school and get to work. Our transportation system needs to provide the structural strength for safe movement as well as provide accessibility for emergency vehicles such as police cars, fire trucks, and ambulances.

Congestion is often a regular feature of any commute for Minnesota drivers – especially for those in the metro. By passing legislation that includes funding for roads, bridges, and transit options, we can empower Minnesotans to make their own decisions about how they choose to get to their destination. Providing these choices to the public allows all Minnesotans to benefit as our roads become less congested – making for a timelier and safer commute for all. In addition to relieving congestion, funding transit services – both in the metro and in Greater Minnesota – provides access to basic needs such as quality food and medical care for vulnerable citizens.

As Minnesotans, we know that our harsh winters punish our infrastructure and can create difficult terrain for vehicles. By addressing the funding needs of our state's roads, bridges, and transit services comprehensively, we can more quickly make the needed maintenance and repairs that will endure for the long-term and help prevent expensive damage to vehicles caused by ailing infrastructure.

Providing a safe and accessible integrated network of roads, bridges, and transit lines is critical as we facilitate economic activity in our state. By making it easier for goods to get to market, the flow of commerce will expand and improve the potential for job growth in our state.

It's important to be clear that we simply cannot address our transportation needs piece-by-piece or region-by-region any longer. We acknowledge that counties throughout our state have specific needs relating to roads, bridges, and transit. **The only realistic opportunity to fulfill all of our transportation obligations statewide is to pass a comprehensive, balanced, sustainable, and dedicated funding package.** We no longer can rely on a “band aid” approach to the maintenance of our roads, bridges, and transit systems.

We appreciate the work members of the House and Senate have done thus far to address our state's transportation needs and we're pleased to see conversations continue to progress on this front at the Capitol. By uniting as leaders from both the metro and Greater Minnesota – just as the Association of Minnesota Counties has done – we can rebuild our transportation infrastructure so no community will be left behind.

Sincerely,

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